

ADVOCATE, COUNSELLOR

The Greek word παρακλητος (RSV “advocate” or “counsellor”) means basically “someone who promotes the interests of someone else”, especially someone who speaks on behalf of someone else. It is used in two different situations in the New Testament:

1. **Advocate, one who speaks on behalf of another**
 2. **Helper, counsellor, one who actively guides and helps**
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1. Advocate, one who speaks on behalf of another

In 1 John 2:1, Jesus is called our “advocate” with God. In other words, Jesus Christ speaks to God on our behalf, asking him to forgive our sins.

1 John 2:1 ... if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father,
Jesus Christ the righteous

TEV ... but if anyone does sin, we have someone who pleads with the
Father on our behalf—Jesus Christ, the righteous one.

☞ Suggestions for translating 1 John 2:1:

† If any person does sin,	† there is	
† If any of us sins,	†	
† someone who speaks on our behalf to our Father (God).	†	†
† someone who asks our Father (God) to forgive us.	†	†
† a spokesman for us before our Father.	†	†
† This is Jesus Christ,	† the righteous person.	†
†	† who has never sinned.	†

See also MEDIATOR.

2. Helper, counsellor, one who actively guides and helps

The same Greek word, παρακλητος, is used in the Gospel of John to describe the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who is active in believers on behalf of God, being with them at all times (John 14:16-17), revealing God’s will, teaching, reminding and guiding (John 14:17, 14:26, 15:26). He shows unbelievers what is wrong and right in God’s sight, and warns people of God’s coming judgement. (John 16:7-11).

John 14:16-17 (16) And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another
Counsellor, to be with you for ever, (17) even the Spirit of truth,
whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor
knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in
you.

Notice particularly the use of the word “another” in John 14:16, “He will give you another Counsellor. . . .” “Another” implies that the Holy Spirit would take over the same role that Jesus himself had.

Suggestions for translating παρακλητοσ in sense 2:

In the KJV, when referring to the Holy Spirit, παρακλητοσ was translated as “comforter.” The meaning of “comforter” at that time, was “one who strengthens.” RSV and some other translations translated as “Counsellor”, while many modern translations translate as “Helper”. Another possibility is “Encourager” e.g., NLT (2004) footnote.

Louw and Nida (1988), section 12.19: “The principal difficulty encountered in rendering παρακλητοσ is the fact that this term covers potentially such a wide area of meaning. The traditional rendering of ‘Comforter’ is especially misleading because it suggests only one very limited aspect of what the Holy Spirit does. A term such as ‘Helper’ is highly generic and can be particularly useful in some languages.”

It may be helpful to use a verbal form. For example:

John 14:26a But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, . . .

Suggestions for translating John 14:26:

But someone is coming who will $\begin{array}{c} \dagger \\ \vdots \\ \dagger \end{array}$ advise $\begin{array}{c} \dagger \\ \vdots \\ \dagger \end{array}$ you.
 $\begin{array}{c} \dagger \\ \vdots \\ \dagger \end{array}$ help/counsel $\begin{array}{c} \dagger \\ \vdots \\ \dagger \end{array}$

This is the Spirit of God. (My) Father will send him

$\begin{array}{c} \dagger \\ \vdots \\ \dagger \end{array}$ in my name. $\begin{array}{c} \dagger \\ \vdots \\ \dagger \end{array}$ He will teach you all things.
 $\begin{array}{c} \dagger \\ \vdots \\ \dagger \end{array}$ to represent me. $\begin{array}{c} \dagger \\ \vdots \\ \dagger \end{array}$

Other words to compare

Advisor, counsellor (Greek □ συμβουλος)

Romans 11:34 “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his **counselor** [Greek συμβουλος]?”

The Greek noun συμβουλος occurs only in Romans 11:34. It is translated in most English versions as “counsellor” or “advisor”. The corresponding verb occurs in the same sense in John 18:14 and Revelation 3:18.

For further study

Braumann, G. Article ‘Advocate’ in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol. 1, Braumann, G. Article ‘Advocate’ in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol. 1, pages 88–91.

Barclay, William. *New Testament Words*. 1964, reprinted Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000, pages 215–222.

